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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3904

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FOLLOWING TEL BOMBAY 314 DTD 06 FEB 76 RCVD NEW DELHI

BEING REPEATED TO YOU. QUOTE

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TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJ: CONGRESS PARTY TRIBUTE TO SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS

1. FEBRUARY 4 SEMINAR OF "DECADE OF SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS"

ORGANIZED BY THE BOMBAY PRADESH CONGRESS COMMITTEE SAW AN
IMPRESSIVE SEGMENT OF BOMBAY'S ELITE TURN OUT TO HEAR SOME OF
INDIA'S MOST DISTINGUISHED SAVANTS DISCUSS AND PRAISE THE COUNTRY'S
SIGNIFICANT SCIENTIFIC ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE FIRST DECADE OF
MRS. GANDHI'S MINISTRY. THE GATHERING WAS ALSO A TRIBUTE TO
RAJNI PATEL'S ABILITY TO ORGANIZE AN IMPRESSIVE MANIFESTATION OF
HOMAGE TO MRS. GANDHI'S LEADERSHIP. OVER 1,200 INVITEES
(ADMISSION BY CARD ONLY) DRAWN LARGEMLY FROM BOMBAY'S ELITE CROWDED
A LOCAL HALL. SOME WERE ATTRACTED BY THE QUALITY AND RENOWN
OF THE SPEAKERS, PARTICULARLY ATOMIC ENERGY CHAIRMAN PAMI

SETHNA, BUT MOST SEEMED GENUINELY PROUD OF THEIR COUNTRY'S
ACCOMPLISHEMENT IN SCIENCE AND WANTED TO PARTICIPATE APPLAUDING
ACHIEVEMENTS IN ATOMIC ENERGY (SETHNA), MEDICINE (SHANTILAL
MEHTA), FUNDAMENTAL RESEARCH (R. RAMANNA), ELECTRONICS
(PROFESSOR M.G.K. MENON) AND EDUCATION (B. VENKATARAMAN).
SETHNA'S ACCOUNT OF NUCLEAR EXPLOSION OF KOTA DREW FAR AND AWAY
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GREATEST APPLAUSE OF EVENING BUT AUDIENCE ALSO WARMED UP TO

STATISTICS OF PROGRESS IN MEDICINE AND ELECTRONICS.

2. RAJNI PATEL'S INTRODUCTION TARGETED OPPOSITION MRS.

GANDHI HAD OVERCOME TO GIVE COUNTRY SCIENCE PROGRAM WHICH IS BEACON FOR DEVELOPING WORLD. HE CITED "AGITATION FROM ABROAD AND DISRUPTION AT HOME" AS CONSTANT THREAT TO CONTINUITY WHICH ESSENTIAL FOR ANY PROGRAM THAT DEPENDS ON SLOW APPLICATION OF BASIC RESEARCH. HE NOTED MRS. GANDHI PRESERVED EVEN THOUGH SOME WOULD HAVE CONSIGNED INDIA FOREVER TO A SECOND-CLASS ROLE IN ATOMIC POWER. HE SAID SHE HAS DEMONSTRATED THAT PROJECTS WHICH LESSER PEOPLE CALLED FRIVOLOUS AND BEYOND MEANS OF INDIA HAVE IN SEVERAL INSTANCES TAKEN THIS COUNTRY TO FRONTIERS OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY.

3. SETHNA AND MENON, WHO WERE PERHAPS BRIGHTEST STARS IN A GLITTERING GALAXY, GAVE VIGOROUS, WELL-RECEIVED ACCOUNTS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THEIR FIELDS, BUT THEY MADE NO DIRECT REFERENCE TO MRS. GANDHI. BOTH HOWEVER DID STRESS THAT INDIGENOUS ACHIEVEMENTS OFTEN ACCOMPLISHED IN FACE OF FOREIGN DOUBTS OR EVEN RESISTANCE. ONLY RAMANNA AND MEHTA DIRECTLY CITED MRS. GANDHI AS MOTIVATING FORCE BEHIND ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN FIELD OF SCIENCE. COMMENT: IT IS ODD THAT IN SUCH GATHERING SETHNA WOULD SHUN OPPORTUNITY TO SCORE A FEW POINTS WITH PARTY FAITHFUL BY PRAISING MRS. GANDHI AS HE IS OFTEN RUMORED TO HAVE HIS EYE ON A TOP POST IN DELHI.

4. INCIDENTALLY, I RECEIVED INVITATION ONLY AT LAST MINUTE AND AS WAS CASE AT KASHMIR WEEK EVENT HOSTED BY LOCAL CONGRESS PARTY FIVE WEEKS AGO I WAS ONLY MEMBER CONSULAR CORPS IN ATTENDANCE. ONCE AGAIN IW AS GIVEN A PLACE OF HONOR, IN FIRST ROW RIGHT NEXT TO SETHNA. PATEL'S GREETING WAS FRIENDLY BUT NOT EFFUSIVE. HE MADE NO ATTEMPT TO PUSH ME INTO PATH OF BATTERY OF PHOTOGRAPHERS.

COURTNEY

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